

Regular Meeting

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of the Northport-East Northport Union Free School District was held on Monday evening, November 2, 2009, beginning at 6:30 p.m., in the Board Conference Room at the William J. Brosnan School, 158 Laurel Avenue, Northport, New York, with Mr. Stephen V. Waldenburg, Jr., Chairperson, opening the meeting and presiding.

Members present: Mrs. Liz Dragone, Mr. Joe Gannon, Mr. Rob Ingraham, Mr. Tim Madden, Mrs. Donna McNaughton, Mrs. Arlene S. Munson, Dr. Kay Hutchins Sato, Mr. Stephen V. Waldenburg, Jr., Mrs. Karen Wills

Members absent: None

Also present: Dr. Marylou McDermott, Superintendent of Schools

1. President Waldenburg called the meeting to order.

Motion was made by Trustee Dragone, seconded by Trustee McNaughton, to convene in Executive Session to discuss matters pertaining to an individual employee.

Unanimously carried.

At 7:40 p.m., motion was made by Trustee Wills, seconded by Trustee Sato, to reconvene in public session in the Cafeteria at the William J. Brosnan School.

Unanimously carried.

Public attendance: There were approximately 60 persons present.

2. Mr. Waldenburg led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance; and
2. Pointed out the emergency exits.
4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Trustee Ingraham, seconded by Trustee Dragone, to approve all items under 4.1:

- 4.1 Minutes
 - 4.1.1 Regular Meeting, October 19, 2009

Unanimously carried.

4.2 For Information: Claim's Auditors Report for Warrants and Schedule of Claims for period ending September 4, September 11, September 15, September 16, September 18, September 21 and September 30, 2009.

5. SPECIAL REPORTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Marylou McDermott, Superintendent, announced that Mr. Izzet Mergen, Director of Music, collaborated on an article in the *Long Island Education Review*, a research publication of SCOPE. Mr. Mergen and three other music directors were interviewed regarding music education programs during these difficult financial times.

Dr. McDermott introduced Mr. Andrew Bromm, Food Service Director, who applied for a grant and received a \$5,000 award and the Office of General Services (OGS) New York State 2009 Best Practices Award in recognition of his creative and innovative practices and use of USDA foods.

The Superintendent commended the many parents from Northport Middle School who attended the Drug and Alcohol Task Force forum presented to 7th grade students and parents on Thursday, October 29th. Dr. McDermott noted that the forum for East Northport Middle School 7th grade students and parents will take place on Wednesday, November 4th.

5.1 Accomplishments of Staff and Students

5.1.1 Mr. Patricia Schmitt, District Chairperson of English K-12, introduced Jessica Luning, English Language Arts Department Student of the Month. Ms. Schmitt stated that Jessica's academic history demonstrates the level of rigor in her program and her outstanding achievement in the challenging courses she studies. Jessica's impressive grades over the past four years attest to her tenacity and penchant for scholarship. In addition to her academic program, Jessica participates in the High School Marching Band as a talented flutist and also serves as band president. Jessica is a member of the National Honor Society and volunteers at fundraisers and charitable events. Ms. Schmitt noted that Jessica's ambitions are to study and major in English possibly at Vassar or Williams College.

The President of the Board and the Superintendent presented Jessica with a certificate of commendation from the Board and congratulated her on her fine accomplishments.

5.1.2 Ms. Patricia Schmitt introduced Kristina Hayhurst, 1st Place Award Recipient in the Suffolk Reading Council Contest.

President Waldenburg and Superintendent McDermott congratulated Kristina on her accomplishment and presented her with a certificate of commendation.

5.1.3 Mr. Andrew Bromm, Food Services Director, was recognized earlier in the evening.

5.2 Motion was made by Trustee Sato, seconded by Trustee Munson, to receive the Annual Report on Secondary Class Size.

Unanimously carried.

There was a brief discussion regarding courses not offered, the ability of students to fulfill sequence requirements of specific programs, and co-seating of IB and AP courses.

In response to a question, Ms. Irene McLaughlin, Northport High School Principal, stated that Journalism I and II were not run due to under-subscription and generation of the school newspaper, *The Rag*, is now running as an extracurricular activity. Ms. McLaughlin also noted that the staff is working diligently to be fiscally responsible. Regarding the Sports Medicine/Athletic Training course offerings, Ms. McLaughlin stated that they are working with the scheduling program to include the prerequisite requirement.

Motion was made by Trustee Dragone, seconded by Trustee Gannon, to reorder the agenda as follows: moving 5.6 up followed by 5.4.2, 5.4.1, 5.3, and 5.5.

Unanimously carried.

5.6 Dr. Marylou McDermott introduced Board Counsel John Gross of Ingerman Smith, LLP.

Mr. Gross discussed a significant Nassau County Supreme Court decision which dismissed a claim by Nassau County Legislator Roger Corbin seeking annulment of the section of the Nassau County Administrative Code commonly referred to as the “Nassau County Guaranty”. Justice Lally dismissed Legislator Corbin’s petition and reaffirmed the legal viability of the Nassau County Guarantee and determined that the State legislature plainly recognized that school districts in Nassau County were not financially responsible for tax certiorari refunds. Mr. Gross noted that this decision is of significant financial importance. If the Court entered a judgment in favor of Legislator Corbin and Nassau County, the burden of approximately \$60 to \$100 million dollars in tax refunds would have been shifted to school districts.

Mr. Gross presented a report on the transportation of students under New York State Education Law §3635. Mr. Gross stated that generally Education Law §3635(1)(a) requires school districts to transport all students in grades kindergarten through twelve, including those attending non-public schools and charter schools, if the distance between such home and school is within the statutorily prescribed limits for such transportation. Under the law, students in grades kindergarten through eight must be provided transportation if they live more than two miles from the school to which they are assigned. Students in grades nine through twelve must be provided transportation if they live more than three miles from the school to which they are assigned. Transportation for lesser or greater distances may only be provided upon approval by the District’s voters. Distance is measured by the nearest available publicly maintained route from home to school. Mr. Gross noted that school districts have broad discretion in selecting measuring points on school property as long as it is done fairly and consistently. Mr. Gross also noted that it is reasonable and sufficient to use an automobile odometer to measure distance to determine eligibility.

In order to change the transportation limitations, the Board of Education may place a proposition on the ballot or a community member may submit a petition to have a proposition placed on the ballot. School districts are required to provide transportation within the same mileage limitations to nonpublic schools attended by students residing in the district. Requests for transportation to nonpublic schools must be submitted in writing on or before the first day of April preceding the school year during which transportation will be provided.

Mr. Gross noted that the 2008-2009 transportation costs to the district were \$7,104,078 of which \$661,000 was reimbursed by State Aid.

The Commissioner of Education has ruled that New York State Education Law §3635 does not authorize the Board of Education to provide transportation for children of less than school age, except in limited circumstances. Section 3635(1)(3) of the Education Law authorizes, but does not require, the Board of Education, at its discretion, to provide transportation under certain circumstances to children attending grades K through 8 between school and child care locations within the school district and the District’s general transportation mileage limitations apply. Mr. Gross stated that if the District decides to furnish such transportation, Section 3635 requires that such services be offered equally to all children in like circumstances, except that the Board may limit the provisions of such transportation to and from childcare locations located within the attendance zone of the school the child attends, and child day care centers and school age child care programs licensed or registered pursuant to section 399 of the Social Services Law located anywhere within the school district.

The Board of Education has elected to provide limited transportation for children attending grade K-8 between school and before and/or after-school child care locations consistent with the authorization provided for in Section 3635. Board Policy 8411.1 authorizes transportation of students to and from child care locations located inside their attendance zones and authorizes transportation of students to and from child day care centers and school age child care programs licensed or registered pursuant to Section 390 of the New York Social Services law located anywhere within the school district.

Mr. Gross noted that the Village Pre-School informed the District that it is not a child care facility, rather it is a private preschool licensed by the State of New York. There was discussion regarding the policy being ambiguous and looking at the Village Pre-School in terms of a non-public educational facility.

Several parents noted that transportation to Village Pre-School would only be provided one way, therefore it would not be an additional service.

Mr. Gross stated that he will prepare an opinion letter regarding whether or not services to Village Pre-School can be provided under the general K-8 provision.

Mr. Gross stated that child safety zones are determined based on regulations established by the Commissioner of Transportation and in consultation with local law enforcement officials. The factors considered for a child safety zone include existence or non-existence of sidewalks or walkways; type of road surface; width of road, footpath or sidewalk; volume and average speed of traffic; density of population; character of area; and existence of traffic safety features. A petition may be submitted to the Board of Education for the establishment of a child safety zone or the Board may initiative an investigation on its own accord. Mr. Gross noted that if it is determined that a child safety zone should be established it must be presented to the voters for approval.

In response to a question about changing the point of measurement at the schools, President Waldenburg responded that he would not direct the superintendent to make that change without knowing the fiscal impact. Mr. Waldenburg asked the Superintendent to provide information on which governmental entity had jurisdiction over the intersection of Elwood Road/Reservoir Avenue and Route 25A with regards to repainting the crosswalk and the possibility of obtaining a crossing guard.

5.4 Review of instructional initiatives in the following areas:

5.4.2 Library

Ms. Sally Herzog, Lead Librarian, stated that the 2009-2010 Library Initiatives include learning and teaching more about World Book Online Reference Center, enabling the Destiny Library System for use by the students from home, and investigating ways MOODLE can be used in the District's library program. Ms. Herzog noted that the Destiny Library Manager combines circulation, cataloging, searching, reporting and management in one centrally installed library software system. Ms. Herzog stated that a Library Media Specialist is a teacher, collaborator, resource locator, communicator, leader, professional development provider, technology integrator and innovator. Ms. Herzog noted that Library Media Specialists love to learn about new ideas and strategies for working with students and teachers and want to be lifelong learners and model that for students and colleagues.

The President of the Board and Superintendent thanked Ms. Herzog for her report on the district's library initiatives.

5.4.1 English Language Arts

Ms. Patricia Schmitt, District Chairperson of English K-12, presented her report on the 2009-2010 English Department Initiatives. Ms. Schmitt stated that the initiatives include developing a "Research and Language Skills Toolbox" for teachers and students in grades 6-12 using the Moodle online learning system, introducing information literacy standards and technology integration best practices at monthly department meetings, and developing mid-term common assessments and developing curricular changes in courses that culminate in the comprehensive English Regents examination. Ms. Schmitt discussed the integration of Library Media Standards with ELA Standards, emphasis placed on content reading and reading to learn, exposure to multiple texts including media and visual literacy, and synthesis and analysis of multiple and disparate texts.

Ms. Schmitt presented the 2008-2009 ELA results with a comparison the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 results and comparison with similar schools. Ms. Schmitt noted a 22 point increase in the 8th grade scores over a 4 year period.

Vice President Munson inquired if the district was moving towards using the automated bibliography and stated that many students are at a disadvantage when entering college in that they do not know how to create a proper bibliography. Mrs. Munson also inquired if there are plans to expand the databases.

Ms. Schmitt stated that teachers will evaluate free ones and give recommendation on Moodle, but right now the use of easybib is suggested.

At 11:00 p.m., motion was made by Trustee Sato, seconded by Trustee McNaughton, to extend the meeting.

Unanimously carried.

Trustee Ingraham asked how the teaching staff helps students improve their writing and how much individual conferencing the teachers do with students to help them improve. Mr. Ingraham also inquired how parents should measure the improvement in their child's writing and if there is sufficient emphasis in the curriculum to improve writing skills.

Ms. Schmitt responded that the writing workshop approach is used to teach writing. Ms. Schmitt noted that students are doing the bulk of the draft work with the teacher or in a computer room and the teachers are conferring with the students individually. Ms. Schmitt stated that if parents have not seen any progress in their child's writing that they should ask the teacher to look at the child's portfolio.

Dr. McDermott stated that the writing workshop is an ongoing initiative in the classrooms where there is an established procedure on how often conferences should take place and how feedback is given to students. Dr. McDermott stated that it is important that students are cognizant of their own writing style and their strengths and weaknesses as writers

There was further discussion regarding the testing data and how similar schools are denoted, best practices with reading comprehension, information literacy, balanced literacy, and the reading curriculum in individual schools.

The President of the Board and Dr. McDermott thanked Ms. Schmitt for her presentation on the English Language Arts initiatives.

5.3 For Information: Report on course catalog changes being considered at the Middle Schools (Note: The final recommendations will be on the agenda for the December 21, 2009 meeting)

5.5 The President of the Board reviewed the upcoming Board of Education Meetings of November 16th, December 7th and December 21st, 2009.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no letters of communication.

7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Name

Comment

Andrew Rapiejko
Parent

Stated that the Wilson program is a great program for children with decoding issues but the District is in need of a program to help students with reading comprehension. Mr. Rapiejko stated that he feels that reading should be the most important topic discussed in the initiatives. Mr. Rapiejko stated that he was told the elementary building principals are in charge of the reading programs and he inquired if other districts have a reading director.

Dr. Marylou McDermott stated the reading program is looked at from a global K-12 perspective and that reading comprehension is an integral strategy. Dr. McDermott noted that all elementary principals are trained in the balanced literacy program and at the elementary level every teacher is a teacher of reading and trained that way. Dr. McDermott also stated that the reading program does need to be looked at more closely and it may be determined that a leader may be needed in that area.

Motion was made by Trustee Munson, seconded by Trustee Gannon, to approve all items under 8. and 9., including Supplemental 8.1.1 (Schedule A #10-43), Supplemental 8.1.2 (Schedule B #13-14), and Supplemental 9.5, 9.6 and 9.7.

8. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT, GENERAL - FOR BOARD ACTION

8.1 Personnel Schedules, each dated November 2, 2009, and each attached and made part of the official minutes:

- 8.1.1 Schedule A - Certified Staff (including Supplemental A)
- 8.1.2 Schedule B - Non-Instructional Staff (including Supplemental B)
- 8.1.3 Schedule C - Salary Transfers
- 8.1.4 Schedule D - Extra Pay
- 8.1.5 Schedule K - PDC NASA
- 8.1.6 Schedule L - PDC UTN

9. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT, FINANCIAL - FOR BOARD ACTION

9.1 Authorizing the administration to apply for the following Suffolk's Edge Teacher Center Grants:

9.1.1 \$1,500.00 to be used at East Northport Middle School to develop a picture book library of content area texts (math, social studies, science, language arts)

9.1.2 \$1,200.00 to be used at East Northport Middle School to create an in-class social studies library to facilitate and stimulate student interest in various historical topics related to the 8th grade curriculum

9.1.3 \$1,200.00 to be used at Northport High School to develop an after school program designed to support at-risk adolescents who do not qualify for special education services, have poor attendance, are disengaged from the school environment and experience limited academic success, by providing after school support from professional educators experienced in assisting at-risk students

9.1.4 \$1,500.00 to be used at Dickinson Avenue School to implement an interactive, instructional approach to improve fluency and overall reading achievement among second and third grade special education students in one classroom

9.1.5 \$1,500.00 "*Character Education Through Law and Literacy*" grant to be used at Fifth Avenue Elementary School to create a new, student scripted, mock trial based upon the book

Shiloh, which is read by students at the 5th grade level

9.1.6 \$1,500.00 “*The CSI Challenge*” grant to be used at Northport High School to help develop and host a Forensic Science and Criminal Investigation Competition

9.1.7 \$1,500.00 “*Fourth Grade Junior Detectives*” grant to be used at Pulaski Road Elementary School to build literacy skills, especially those assessed on the NYS 4th grade ELA exam

9.1.8 \$1,500.00 “*Salute to Hospitalized Veterans*” grant to be used at East Northport Middle School to conduct a joint effort between two model programs in the district

9.2 Authorizing the administration to apply for the following Target Field Trip Grant

9.2.1 \$800.00 to offset Fifth Avenue Elementary School’s fifth grade trip to Gettysburg, PA

9.3 Approving the following donations to the District:

9.3.1 \$2,168.00 from various donors to the Michael C. Kauffman Memorial Scholarship Fund

9.4 Approving a 2009-2010 Instructional Service Agreement between the Northport-East Northport Union Free School District and Development Disabilities Institute

9.5 Approving End of Year transfer of funds to balance 2008-2009 budget

9.6 Approving transfer of general fund appropriations (\$4,599,867.06) in the 2009-2010 budget

9.7 Approving transfer of general fund appropriations (16,702.20) in the 2009-2010 budget

Vote on Trustee Munson’s motion to approve all items under 8. and 9., including Supplemental 8.1.1 (Schedule A #10-43), Supplemental 8.1.2 (Schedule B #13-14), and Supplemental 9.5, 9.6 and 9.7 was unanimously carried.

10. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT - FOR INFORMATION ONLY

10.1 Schedule H – Use of Facilities

10.2 Schedule I – Home Instruction

11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Trustee Wills inquired about the status of Suffolk County Water Authority placing wells on school district property and noted the letter the Board received about SCWA using BOCES property.

Ms. Kathleen Molander, Assistant Superintendent for Business, stated that she left a message with Mr. Pokorny from the Suffolk County Water Authority but has not heard back. Ms. Molander will get in touch with Mr. Pokorny to discuss whether use of District property is still a viable option.

12. NEW BUSINESS

There being no further business to discuss at this time, motion was made by Trustee Gannon, seconded by Trustee Sato, to adjourn the meeting.

At 11:40 p.m., the Chair declared the meeting adjourned.

Beth M. Nystrom
District Clerk

bmn